

Lachi language

The **Lachi language** (Chinese: 拉基; pinyin: *lājī*, Vietnamese: **La Chi**; autonym in China: *li ɿpu ɿ ljo ɿ*; autonym in Vietnam: *qu ɿ te ɿ*, where *qu ɿ* means "person"^[3]) is a Kra language spoken in Yunnan, China and in northern Vietnam. There were 9,500 Lachi speakers in Vietnam in 1990. Edmondson (2008) reports another 2,500 in Maguan County, Yunnan, China for 1995, but Li Yunbing (2000) reports 60 speakers in Maguan out of an ethnic population of 1,600.

Lachi	
Region	Vietnam
Ethnicity	Lachi
Native speakers	(7,000 cited 1990–2007) ^[1]
Language family	Kra–Dai <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kra ▪ Ge–Chi ▪ Lachi
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	Either: ɿbt – Lachi ɿwh – White Lachi
Glottolog	lach1247 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/lach1247)

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Subdivisions

Weera Ostapirat^[4] proposed three major subdivisions for the Lachi language.

- **Northern** (Chinese or Flowery Lachi)
- **Central** (White Lachi)
- **Southern** (Long Haired and Black Lachi)

Jerold A. Edmondson notes that Vietnamese researchers recently have not been able to locate White (Central) Lachi speakers. It is also the least studied variety of Lachi.

The *Maguan County Gazetteer* 马关县志 (1996) lists the following Lachi ethnic subdivisions.

- Flowery Lachi 花拉基
- White Lachi 白拉基
- Black Lachi 黑拉基
- Chinese Lachi 汉拉基

- Manyou Lachi 曼忧拉基
- Manpeng Lachi 曼棚拉基

The *Maguan County Gazetteer* 马关县志 (1996) also lists the following autonyms for the Lachi.

- She 舍
- Laguo 拉果
- Heitu 黑土
- Gudai 古逮
- Yibi 依比
- Yimei 依梅
- Yiduo 依多
- Yibeng 依崩

The Republic of China-era *Maguan County Gazetteer* 马关县志 gives the names Labo 刺僰 (with a dog radical 犭 for La 刺) and Laji 拉鸡 (Li 2000: 5).

Geographic distribution

Kosaka (2000) reports 6,000–8,000 Lachi speakers in Vietnam, and 2,000 in China. The Lachi of Maguan County, China are currently classified as Zhuang (Li 2000), while the Lachi of Malipo County, China, along with the Qabiao, are classified as Yi. The Lachi of Vietnam have official status as a separate ethnic group.

China

The Lachi of China live in various locations in Maguan County (马关县), Yunnan, which is located in Wenshan Zhuang and Miao Autonomous Prefecture (文山壮族苗族自治州) near the border with Hà Giang Province, Vietnam. According to American linguist Jerold A. Edmondson, the Lachi of China are thought to have moved to their present location during the Qing Dynasty from places in Vietnam called Maibu 麥布, Maidu 麥督, and Maiha 麥哈.^[5] Other Lachis are also found scattered in Yanshan, Qiubei, Xichou, and Malipo counties.

The subdivisions, with their respective locations, are as follows:

Flowery Lachi (autonym: *li ɿpu t ljo ɿŋ ɿtɻeo t*)

- Jinchang Township 金厂镇
 - Zhongzhai 中寨^[6]
 - Sanjajie 三家街^[7]

Chinese Lachi (autonym: *li ɿpu t ɻeo t*)

- Jiahانqing Township 夹寒箐乡
 - Niulongshan 牛龙山^[8]

- Dujiaozhai 独脚寨^[9]
- Shi'er Daohe 十二道河^[10]
- Laozhai 老寨^[11]
- Renhe Township 仁和镇
- Baishiyan 白石岩^[12]
- Shiqiao 石桥^[13]
- Huomuqing 火木箐^[14]

Pocket Lachi (autonym: *li ɿpu ɿ te ɿ*)

- Nanlao Township 南捞乡: Busu 布苏^{[15][16]}

Red Lachi (autonym: *li ɿpu ɿ ke ɿ*)

- Xiaobazi Township 小坝子镇
 - Tianpeng 田棚^[17]
 - Laqie 拉劫 / Laqi 拉气^[18]

Vietnam

The Lachi live mostly in Xín Mǎn District and Hoàng Su Phì District, Hà Giang Province, Vietnam. There are also many Lachi living in Bắc Quang District in southern Hà Giang Province, which is outside their home district of Hoàng Su Phì. Since the Lachi dialects of Vietnam have many Chinese loanwords, the Lachi of Vietnam must have migrated from areas to the north in China (Kosaka 2000). Similarly, the Lachi of Maguan County, Yunnan, China just across the border believed that their ancestors had migrated from Ami Prefecture 阿迷州, which is now Kaiyuan, Yunnan.^[3] In Vietnam, Jerold Edmondson notes that the most common autonym used by his Lachi informants is *qu ɿ te ɿ*, with *qu ɿ* meaning 'people' (from Proto-Kra *khra^{C1} 'people').^[3]

The Lachi people are an officially recognized ethnic group in Vietnam, and are divided as such (Kosaka 2000, Edmondson 2008):

Long Haired Lachi (autonym: *li ɿpu ɿ tjon ɿ*)

- Bản Phùng, Hoàng Su Phì District — largest village; regarded as cradle site

Black Lachi (autonym: *li ɿpu ɿ pi ɿ*)

- Bản Díu, Xín Mǎn — speakers have shifted to the Nùng language

White Lachi (autonym: *li ɿpu ɿ pu ɿ*; language possibly extinct)

- Bản Păng, Hoàng Su Phì District — speakers have shifted to the Nùng language, the regional lingua franca

- Bản Máy, Hoàng Su Phì District — speakers have shifted to the Nùng language, the regional lingua franca

Lachi is also spoken in (Kosaka 2000):

- Tân Lợi hamlet (Thôn Tân Lợi), Bắc Quang District, Hà Giang Province — formed through a secondary migration from Tân Lập village (Xã Tân Lập), which is now called Xã Tân Thành.
- Chí Cà, Xín Mần District, Hà Giang Province
- Bắc Hà District, Lào Cai Province — descended from Bản Phùng migrants; can no longer speak Lachi (e.g., in Thôn Núng Choáng, Xã Nàm Sán)
- Mường Khương District, Lào Cai Province — descended from Bản Phùng migrants; can no longer speak Lachi

Kosaka (2000) describes the following migratory route that took the Lachi of Bản Phùng, Hoàng Su Phì District to other locations, all in Bắc Quang District, Hà Giang Province.

1. Bản Phùng, Hoàng Su Phì District
2. Xã Tân Lập (now called Xã Tân Thành)
3. Xã Yên Bình
4. Xã VĨ Thượng
5. Xã Xuân Giang (later divided into two parts, including Nà Khương, which has the higher concentration of Lachi people)

The *Maguan County Gazetteer* 马关县志 (1996) lists the following locations in Vietnam with ethnic Lachi.

- Manyou 曼忧
- Manpeng 曼棚
- Manban 曼班
- Manmei 曼美
- Jiga 鸡嘎
- Hualong 花隆
- Mengkang 猛康

Grammar

Like other Kra languages such as Gelao and Buyang, Lachi displays clause-final negation (Li 2000).

Phonology

Consonants

		Labial		Alveolar		(Alveolo-)palatal	Velar		Uvular	Glottal
		plain	pal.	plain	pal.		plain	lab.		
Stop/ Affricate	voiceless	p	p ^j	t	t ^j	tʂ	k	k ^w	q	?
	aspirated	p ^h	p ^h j	t ^h	t ^{j h}		k ^h	k ^{h w}	q ^h	
	voiced	b	b ^j	(d)						
Fricative		f		(s)		ʂ				h
Approximant		w				j				
Nasal		m	m ^j	n	n ^j	ɳ	ɳ ^w			
Lateral				l	l ^j					
Syllabic	voiced	m̩					ɳ̩ ^w			
	glottalized	?m̩					?ɳ̩ ^w			

- /d/ appears in loanwords of Vietnamese origin.
- Approximant sounds /j w/ when occurring before /i/, maybe also be realized as [ʐ ɣ]. Both sounds also can be realized as a voiced glottal sound [h].

Vowels

	Front	Central	Back
Close	i		u
Close-mid	e		ɤ
Open-mid	ɛ		ɔ
Open		a	ɑ

- Standard vowel sounds [i] and [ɛ], only occur after palatal, velar, palatalized and labialized initials. After other initials elsewhere, they become velarized as [-ɤ i], [-ɤ ɛ].

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External links

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